

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

2023

**English Language Arts Test
Session 1**

Grade 6

April 19–21, 2023

RELEASED QUESTIONS

Session 1



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read all the directions carefully.
- Most questions will make sense only when you **read the whole passage**. You may need to read the passage more than once to answer a question.
- When a question includes a quotation from a passage, you **may** need to review **both** the quotation and the whole passage in order to answer the question correctly.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before making your choice or writing your response.
- In writing your responses, be sure to
 - clearly organize your writing;
 - completely answer the questions being asked;
 - support your responses with examples or details from the text; and
 - write in complete sentences using correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

In this story, a girl tries to tame a mustang horse she calls Ranger.

Excerpt from *Carrots for Ranger*

by Jennifer Adam

- 1 I had his name picked out the day we loaded him on the trailer: Ranger, because it made me think of courage and stamina,¹ adventure and exploration. (I should have called him Houdini,² or Trouble, or Bucksnot or something instead, as it turned out.)
- 2 It was dusk by the time we hauled him home, so I tossed him some hay, showed him where the water tank was, and then left him to settle in. Ghost whinnied a greeting from her own pasture, so I knew Ranger wouldn't feel too alone. I couldn't wait to spend a full day with him, to touch him for the first time, to see what he was like and how he might react to things. But as I jogged toward the corral gate early that first morning, confusion and a sick, cold dread seeped into my bones.
- 3 Ghost was dozing quietly, but Ranger was nowhere to be seen. . . .
- 4 Panic sank sharp claws into my shoulders and hissed prickly dragon breath down the back of my neck. Ranger was wild, untouched. If he'd managed to get out of his safe corral, how on earth could I catch him again?
- 5 A loud whinny broke the stillness of the morning, and hoofbeats thundered behind me. Ranger galloped into view along the edge of the cornfield, hooves kicking puffs of dust and tail streaming behind him like a banner.
- 6 "What are you doing out here?" I cried. "How did you escape?"
- 7 He tossed his head, almost as if he were laughing at me, and jumped back into the pen with another whinny. . . .
- 8 "Ranger! You just jumped a six-foot fence from a standstill!" I'd guessed he was athletic, but I'd never seen a horse clear a jump like that with such little effort.
- 9 He flicked his ears at me, spun on his back legs, and promptly jumped out again. Just to prove he could, I suppose. . . .
- 10 I spent the next few weeks letting him get used to the sound of my voice, the rhythm of my movements. Whenever Dad didn't need my help, I sat on an upturned bucket while Ranger nibbled hay or grass, hoping to prove I wasn't a threat. I tried offering treats—flaxseed cookies, oatmeal biscuits, peppermints, even a scoop of Mom's apple crisp—but mustangs off the range are skeptical of new flavors, and Ranger didn't believe he could eat any of these things. I brought a carrot out once, but the crisp snap as I broke it in pieces sent him bucking across the pen. . . .

GO ON

11 One day, toward the end of summer, I brought a couple of carrots out for Ghost. She nickered eagerly when she saw me reach into my pocket. Ranger jumped out of his pen to join us in her pasture, curiosity nudging him closer. When he saw the mare take a piece of carrot from my palm and heard her crunch it, he tiptoed toward her so he could breathe into her face and sniff her muzzle.

12 *What is she eating?* he seemed to ask.

13 Carefully, I offered him a piece of carrot, too.

14 It took him a long moment to make up his mind, but he finally pinched it in his lips and took a single, hesitant bite. His eyes widened. His ears flicked forward. He crunched again, drool slipping from his mouth as he chewed. He gobbled that carrot down, looking to me for another. *What deliciousness is this?* his expression seemed to say. *And how can I get more?*

15 Carrots proved the key to his training from that moment on. I used them as rewards when he stood for haltering, when he learned to walk beside me as I held the lead rope, when he let me pick up his feet.

16 Some horses turn greedy for treats, pushing and shoving in their eagerness to eat something tasty. I only gave Ghost treats on rare occasions; otherwise, she got rude. But Ranger remained polite, even when he realized I always carried his carrots in my pockets. If he felt his efforts weren't being rewarded quickly or often enough, he might gently nudge my pocket with his nose to get my attention, but then he'd take a couple of steps back to wait patiently while I dug a bit of carrot out for him.

17 Carrots taught him that humans could be trusted, despite his strong instincts to flee strangers. After school started, I begged my friends to stop by with carrots for him, and Ranger started to look forward to meeting new people. It was quite a surprise for a work crew building a new grain bin on our farm a few months later when he jumped out of the pasture and came galloping up to check the contents of their lunch coolers!

¹**stamina:** ability to keep going

²**Houdini:** magician and escape artist

1

Which statement **best** supports a central claim of the story?

- A Carrots are necessary for wild horses to perform the tasks they are given.
- B Treats given to some wild horses may result in rude and aggressive behavior.
- C Wild horses can learn to trust people if they are treated with patience and kindness.
- D People should avoid naming wild horses until they learn the behavior of the animals.

2

Read this phrase from paragraph 5.

... hooves kicking puffs of dust and tail streaming behind him like a banner.

The author **most likely** uses this phrase to

- A highlight Ranger's speed
- B show Ranger's refusal to be tamed
- C illustrate Ranger's desire for freedom
- D indicate Ranger's distance from the corral

3

Paragraphs 5 and 6 fit in the overall structure of the story by

- A expanding the setting
- B introducing the conflict
- C foreshadowing a resolution
- D describing a relationship

GO ON

4

Which quotation **best** supports a theme of the story?

- A “It was dusk by the time we hauled him home, so I tossed him some hay, showed him where the water tank was, and then left him to settle in.” (paragraph 2)
- B “If he’d managed to get out of his safe corral, how on earth could I catch him again?” (paragraph 4)
- C “Ranger galloped into view along the edge of the cornfield, hooves kicking puffs of dust and tail streaming behind him like a banner.” (paragraph 5)
- D “I spent the next few weeks letting him get used to the sound of my voice, the rhythm of my movements.” (paragraph 10)

5

What is the **most** likely meaning of the word “skeptical” as used in paragraph 10?

- A afraid of
- B cautious about
- C unaware of
- D worried about

6

What do the details in paragraphs 11 through 14 indicate about Ranger?

- A He is ready to begin his training.
- B His curiosity is overcoming his lack of trust.
- C He is excited to try different foods.
- D His desire for companionship is growing.

7

How does the author **mainly** develop the narrator's point of view in the story?

- A by sharing the narrator's thoughts about Ranger
- B by showing how the narrator tries to make Ranger feel at home
- C by describing the narrator's reaction when Ranger escapes
- D by indicating why the narrator believes Ranger will like carrots

GO ON

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 22 through 28.

Excerpt from *Welcome to the World of Hummingbirds*

by Diane Swanson

- 1 English-speaking people named hummingbirds after the hum of their beating wings, but people who spoke Portuguese focused on the way the birds feed. Their word for hummingbird means “kiss the flower.” The French seemed especially struck by its little body, naming it “fly-sized bird.”
- 2 Hummers are the smallest birds in the world. The calliope hummingbird is the tiniest in North America. Full-grown, it is as short as your thumb and weighs less than a penny. . . .
- 3 All hummingbirds wear thick coats. For their size, they produce more feathers than any other bird. And on many hummers, some of these feathers gleam like colorful jewels in the bright sunshine. Stand between a hummingbird and the sun—with the light to your back—and you’ll witness the flash as the bird faces the sun. WOW! But when the light or the angle isn’t right, the brilliance disappears and the bright colors fade to drab.
- Where in the World**
- 4 Hummingbirds live where flowers bloom—but only in the western half of the world. The birds all make their homes in North, Central, and South America. Most kinds live in hot jungles. Others do well in cooler climates. Rufous hummingbirds, for instance, spend part of each year in Alaska.
- 5 Look for hummingbirds of one kind or another in very different types of homes: sea coasts, forests, mountain meadows, deserts, and grassy plains. The birds raise their families in the wilderness, but also in busy city parks and backyard gardens. If you set out a feeder of sugary water, hummingbirds will often arrive for dinner. Some become so comfortable around people, they perch on fingers to eat. . . .
- 6 Twice each year, a few kinds of hummingbirds migrate long distances between their summer and winter homes. Ruby-throated and rufous hummers fly more than 3200 kilometres (2000 miles) from their nesting sites in the north to their winter homes in the south. About 800 kilometres (500 miles) of the ruby-throated’s long journey is across the Gulf of Mexico. It’s an amazing trip, which the hummingbirds make nonstop, and usually alone.

GO ON

World Full of Food

- 7 Imagine eating six times an hour. That's nothing for a hummingbird. It normally feeds every 10 minutes—sometimes more often—downing about 60 meals a day!
- 8 Hummingbirds are so active they burn up energy fast. One scientist figured that if an average man used as much energy as a ruby-throated hummingbird, he would need to eat 130 kilograms (285 pounds) of hamburger every day. And before the ruby-throated migrates, it stores energy by eating even more than usual, growing about 50 percent heavier. The extra weight slows its speed, but it helps the bird fly farther.
- 9 A hummingbird feeds mostly on nectar—the sweet liquid formed inside flowers. The bird sticks its long tongue into a blossom and laps the nectar. The liquid rises through grooves along the tongue. Then the bird draws its tongue back in. Its beak squeezes the nectar off when the bird sticks its tongue out again. To get enough food, a hummer might need to check out 3000 blossoms in a single day. . . .

World in Motion

- 10 Hummingbirds are most at home in the air. They're champion acrobats of the sky! Not only can they zoom forward like other birds, they can also go backward. As they move from flower to flower, they flit sideways easily. If flying upside down might help the hummers escape danger, they can do that, too—for short distances. But most amazingly of all, they can hover¹ in midair.
- 11 Narrow, pointed wings help make these acrobatics possible. The wings are strong, too. The muscles that move them weigh at least one-quarter as much as the whole bird. And the hummingbird moves its wings in an odd way, tracing figure eights in the air. That helps it create power on both the upbeat and the downbeat. Depending on the kind of hummer and what it's doing, it often beats its wings more than 40 times a second!
- 12 For its size, the hummingbird travels at a quick pace. The ruby-throated has been tracked at 43 kilometres (27 miles) an hour. It flies—and dives—much faster when it's trying to attract a mate or respond to threats. But traveling at full speed doesn't end in crash landings. A hummer can make sudden stops—even on a narrow perch—with grace. . . .

New World

- 13 When the little hummers are only two to three weeks old, they start flying. They're surprisingly good right away, but they have to work to improve their landing skills. Then they can follow their mother from flower to flower and learn to feed as she does. The chicks also practice chasing and catching insects in the air. Sometimes, they chase each other, too—just for fun.

Spotting the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird in New York

What to Look For	When to Look (by Region)	Where to Look
<p><i>Male:</i> Ruby-red throat, which gives the bird its name, emerald-green head and back, white chest</p> <p><i>Female:</i> Bright green back, white chest</p>	<p><i>Mid-March through summer:</i> NYC and Long Island</p> <p><i>Early April through summer:</i> Catskill and southern region</p> <p><i>Mid-April through summer:</i> Central and western NY</p> <p><i>Early May through summer:</i> Northern New York, near Canada</p>	<p><i>Countryside:</i> thimble-sized nests in ferns, oaks, maples, poplars, pines, spruce trees</p> <p><i>Neighborhoods:</i> beds of bright flowers, especially red, tube-shaped ones, backyard feeders, parks</p> <p><i>New York City:</i> Wagner Park and Central Park</p>

¹ **hover:** to remain in one place while flying

GO ON

- 22** Hummingbirds have eyes on the sides of their heads, allowing them to see frontwards and sideways. Which phrase from paragraph 10 **best** suggests why this feature is useful for hummingbirds?
- A** “most at home in the air”
 - B** “they can also go backward”
 - C** “move from flower to flower”
 - D** “they can hover in midair”
- 23** The section “Where in the World” **mainly** contributes to the reader’s understanding of the article by
- A** letting the reader know where hummingbirds are often found
 - B** indicating why some hummingbirds prefer cooler climates
 - C** explaining to the reader how hummingbirds interact with people
 - D** emphasizing that some hummingbirds often travel alone
- 24** Which detail from the article does the information in the table support?
- A** “For their size, they produce more feathers than any other bird.” (paragraph 3)
 - B** “The birds raise their families in the wilderness, but also in busy city parks and backyard gardens.” (paragraph 5)
 - C** “It normally feeds every 10 minutes—sometimes more often—downing about 60 meals a day!” (paragraph 7)
 - D** “A hummingbird feeds mostly on nectar—the sweet liquid formed inside flowers.” (paragraph 9)

25

Read this detail from paragraph 12 of the article.

A hummer can make sudden stops—even on a narrow perch—with grace. . . .

This detail suggests that hummingbirds are

- A skilled at flying
- B unsure when landing
- C easily observed
- D rarely distracted

26

Which detail from the article would be **most** important to include in a summary?

- A “Stand between a hummingbird and the sun—with the light to your back—and you’ll witness the flash as the bird faces the sun.” (paragraph 3)
- B “Hummingbirds live where flowers bloom—but only in the western half of the world.” (paragraph 4)
- C “Ruby-throated and rufous hummers fly more than 3200 kilometres (2000 miles) from their nesting sites in the north to their winter homes in the south.” (paragraph 6)
- D “They’re surprisingly good right away, but they have to work to improve their landing skills.” (paragraph 13)

GO ON

27

This question is worth 2 credits.

In “Excerpt from *Welcome to the World of Hummingbirds*,” what does the information in paragraphs 6 and 8 illustrate about hummingbird migration? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

Write your response for this question in your separate Session 1 Answer Booklet.

Writing on this page will not be scored.

28

This question is worth 2 credits.

What is a central idea of “Excerpt from *Welcome to the World of Hummingbirds*”? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

Write your response for this question in your separate Session 1 Answer Booklet.

Writing on this page will not be scored.

STOP

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

2023

**English Language Arts Test
Session 2**

Grade 6

April 19–21, 2023

RELEASED QUESTIONS

Session 2



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read all the directions carefully.
- Most questions will make sense only when you **read the whole passage**. You may need to read the passage more than once to answer a question.
- When a question includes a quotation from a passage, you **may** need to review **both** the quotation and the whole passage in order to answer the question correctly.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before making your choice or writing your response.
- In writing your responses, be sure to
 - clearly organize your writing;
 - completely answer the questions being asked;
 - support your responses with examples or details from the text; and
 - write in complete sentences using correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- For the last question in this test book, you may plan your writing on the Planning Page provided, but do NOT write your final answer on this Planning Page. Writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on the lined response pages provided.

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 29 through 35.

In this article, the author shares memories of his father's restaurant, the New Eastern Chinese Restaurant.

Excerpt from *The Rice Room: Growing Up Chinese-American from Number Two Son to Rock 'n' Roll*

by Ben Fong-Torres

1 The rice room—the *mai fong*—was the generic¹ name for an area in the back of our father's restaurant.

2 From the time of my birth in 1945 until they sold the restaurant ten years later, the cafe at 710 Webster Street was my home away from home.

3 Sometimes, it was just plain home. . . .

4 To us, the kitchen was a mysterious place. Our kitchen at home was so simple: an old Sparks stove, a refrigerator, sink, and table. At the New Eastern, it was a bustling *factory*. Almost an entire wall was taken up by a line of gigantic black woks.² This was my father's stage. He strode the length of the four woks, each one fired up by gas flames underneath. Beneath him, planks of wood, raised off the ground an inch or two, served to give his legs and feet some spring, and to allow food particles to drip through, to be swept off the floor later.

5 The sink was the size of a bathtub; the refrigerator had glass doors and stretched three times as wide as the one at home. Every appliance was bigger, and there were things we never saw anywhere else, like the big cylindrical metal oven in which my father draped rods holding large marinated pieces of pork loin. We could hear the fire roaring from the bottom of this *loo-how*. My dad would go about his business, and then, always at exactly the right time, he'd wander over, lift off the top, and pluck out several rods of barbecued pork—glowing bright red, with black at the tips.

6 If I happened by at that magical moment, I'd stop. "*Yeet-gow!*" I'd say. One piece. And, taking a big Chinese cleaver, he'd deftly³ chop off a piece of the succulent,⁴ sweet meat. "One dollah!" he'd shout, then hand it over.

7 My father made the best food in town. Every now and then, he'd make a batch of *Jah-Don*—which meant "bombs," but which tasted infinitely better. They were Chinese cream puffs without the cream, but liberally dipped in sugar.

GO ON

8 There was nothing he wouldn't try. If he tasted a candy he liked, he'd try to duplicate it himself. He was proud of a rock candy he whipped up once and determined to sell at the front counter of the New Eastern. We, of course, served as his guinea pigs, and we couldn't bring ourselves to tell him the sad truth: The candy was so hard that it was inedible. I rolled a piece around my mouth. "Tastes good, *Ba-Ba*," I said. Then, when he looked away, I spat it out.

9 Life in a Chinese restaurant gave us access to some strange snacks, most of which we grew to like. There were the *moy*, the salted or sugared preserved plums given so freely as gifts. The salted ones set off ticklish explosions inside our mouths, but once we adjusted, nothing rivaled the satisfaction of working the plum around, getting down to the plum seed.

10 There were the pickled scallions we'd pluck out of the jar, bulbous onion heads that we thought of as candy. Sometimes, Dad would get a sugar cane or two at the produce market and chop off inch-long pieces for us to suck on.

11 When we ventured beyond the rice room and kitchen, into the dining room, we'd run into the waiter, Gim Bok. He was a tall, spindly⁵ man with rimless glasses and thinning hair who liked to spin stories to us. Watching my little sister Shirley nibbling on an apple, he'd lean over.

12 "Don't eat the seed," he said, "or an apple tree will grow inside you."

13 "What?"

14 "Yes. Right inside your stomach, an apple tree!"

¹**generic:** general, common

²**woks:** pans used for Asian cooking

³**deftly:** with skill

⁴**succulent:** juicy

⁵**spindly:** thin

29

Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

To us, the kitchen was a mysterious place.

What is the **main** way the author develops this idea?

- A by contrasting the restaurant kitchen with the kitchen in his home
- B by referring to the sizes of the sink and refrigerator in the restaurant kitchen
- C by describing objects in the restaurant kitchen with which he was unfamiliar
- D by explaining the purpose of the raised planks of wood in the restaurant kitchen

30

Read this sentence from paragraph 9.

Life in a Chinese restaurant gave us access to some strange snacks, most of which we grew to like.

Which statement **best** represents the meaning of this sentence?

- A The author learns to enjoy unfamiliar food available in the restaurant.
- B The author ignores the restaurant food he finds unpleasant.
- C The author prefers restaurant snacks he has had before.
- D The author looks for different snacks in the restaurant.

GO ON

31 Many restaurant owners must be creative to be successful. Which quotation from the article **best** supports this idea?

- A** “. . . planks of wood, raised off the ground an inch or two, served to give his legs and feet some spring . . .” (paragraph 4)
- B** “. . . now and then, he’d make a batch of *Jah-Don* . . .” (paragraph 7)
- C** “If he tasted a candy he liked, he’d try to duplicate it . . .” (paragraph 8)
- D** “Sometimes, Dad would get a sugar cane or two at the produce market . . .” (paragraph 10)

32 How does the author **best** help the reader understand his father’s point of view?

- A** by describing his father striding “the length of the four woks” (paragraph 4)
- B** by describing his father taking out “several rods” of pork (paragraph 5)
- C** by claiming that “There was nothing he wouldn’t try.” (paragraph 8)
- D** by claiming he offered “a sugar cane or two” as a snack (paragraph 10)

33 What is the meaning of the phrase “to spin stories” in paragraph 11?

- A** to tell lies
- B** to invent humorous tales
- C** to warn others
- D** to create feelings of excitement

34

In the article, the **main** way the author represents his childhood experiences is by describing

- A the size of the kitchen in the restaurant
- B the various types of food he ate at the restaurant
- C the different people who worked at the restaurant
- D the attempts of his father to make candy in the restaurant

35

Which claim by the author is **most** strongly supported by evidence in the article?

- A “The rice room . . . was the generic name for an area in the back of our father’s restaurant.” (paragraph 1)
- B “From the time of my birth . . . the cafe at 710 Webster Street was my home away from home.” (paragraph 2)
- C “. . . nothing rivaled the satisfaction of working the plum around, getting down to the plum seed.” (paragraph 9)
- D “. . . a tall, spindly man with rimless glasses and thinning hair who liked to spin stories to us.” (paragraph 11)

GO ON

Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 36 and 37.

Richard is trying to figure out what his English teacher, Mr. Best, wants him to write.

Excerpt from *Rope Burn*

by Jan Siebold

- 1 I started out liking him this year. He actually has a sense of humor sometimes. I just wish I could figure out what he wants from me. . . .
- 2 Mr. Best had the brilliant idea that we should write a composition about a proverb¹ that illustrates something that has happened in our lives. He gave us a whole list of proverbs to choose from. . . .
- 3 So far this fall, every paper that I've written for him has been a struggle. Each week since September, he has assigned a composition of our choice. I would try to write a really good one that included lots of different points of view. But he never gave me anything higher than a "C." Mr. Best's comments were always something like "I want to know what YOU think, Richard," or "Your thoughts are scattered. What is your point?"
- 4 Last time, I tried an experiment. I decided to open an encyclopedia to any page and point to a topic. I figured that I couldn't go wrong with just plain facts. The subject I happened to pick was "carbon." Don't worry. I'm not stupid enough to copy an encyclopedia article word-for-word. Mr. Best would probably turn me over to the FBI for that. I read the article and picked out the most interesting facts. Believe me when I tell you that carbon is not that interesting.
- 5 This time, I got a "B+", along with a note to "see me after class."
- 6 "Richard," Mr. Best began, "you obviously put forth some effort on this latest assignment. You organized your ideas into a nice, cohesive framework."²
- 7 Why don't English teachers just speak plain English, I wonder? . . .
- 8 "Richard," he said. "You need to find your writing voice."
- 9 I must have looked confused, because he went on to explain.
- 10 "Somehow I think you're trying to write about what I want to read, not what you want to write. The real you doesn't come through in your compositions. It's okay to express your feelings or opinions when you write. Just try to be yourself, Richard. Why don't you think about it for this assignment."

GO ON

- 11 So I have been thinking about it. I keep listening and listening, Mr. Best, but I don't hear a voice.

¹**proverb:** a wise and well-known saying, such as "Don't count your chickens before they hatch"

²**cohesive framework:** good organization

GO ON

36

This question is worth 2 credits.

Based on the details in “Excerpt from *Rope Burn*,” what are the narrator’s feelings about his teacher? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

GO ON

37

This question is worth 2 credits.

In paragraph 8 of “Excerpt from *Rope Burn*,” what does Mr. Best mean when he tells the narrator to find his own “writing voice”? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

GO ON

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 38 and 39.

Griffin has a speech to give. His mother insists on helping him.

Excerpt from *Speechless*

by Valerie Sherrard

- 1 Something you should know about my mom: when she gets an idea in her head, there's no shaking it. Or her. After a couple of hours, during which she made suggestions and forced me to listen to sample paragraphs on a bunch of different subjects, I did something even stupider than mentioning it in the first place: I gave in. Or, as my best friend Bryan said when I told him about it later, I capitulated.¹
- 2 In my defense, by that time I hardly knew what I was doing. I just wanted the torture to end. But when the confusion lifted from my brain I discovered that the topic I'd agreed to was not, as I'd thought, interplanetary travel. Instead, it was some stupid thing about men being from Mars and women being from Venus.
- 3 I still didn't know what that meant until Mom brought out this book with a dorky-looking guy on the cover and started writing stuff down. She was on her third paragraph when I realized. . . .
- 4 "Hey!" I said. "This isn't about space travel."
- 5 "Of course it isn't, dear," Mom said, barely glancing at me. . . .
- 6 I probably don't need to tell you that when speech day came it was my turn to get up in front of the class I found myself mumbling that the topic I had "chosen" to speak on was the difference between how men and women communicate.
- 7 The snickering started almost immediately. By the third time I'd made my miserable way through to the third prompt card everyone was laughing. That was when I dropped the cue cards. I bent over, scooped them from the floor, and kept reading. Somehow my brain failed to kick up the message that the cards were now in random order.
- 8 When I finally realized I was repeating myself, I stopped in the middle of a sentence and flipped to the next one. When I heard myself rereading the opening line I stopped, tried to reorganize them, and somehow I managed to end up reading it a third time. The class howled. Even Miss Harlan was struggling to keep from laughing.
- 9 It went downhill after that.
- 10 I pressed on, knowing that I'd have to repeat the whole experience if I didn't. I read unconnected things from out-of-order cards until the timekeeper mercifully signaled that my time was up. As I stumbled back toward my seat, it felt less like I was moving down the aisle and more like the entire room was rushing toward me.

GO ON

11 Thinking back on that whole fiasco,² it's no wonder the thought of another performance in front of the class was enough to send me into a spin. By the time the bell rang to dismiss us that day, my mind was made up.

12 I *had* to find a way out of it.

¹**capitulated:** gave up

²**fiasco:** a disaster

GO ON

38

This question is worth 2 credits.

In “Excerpt from *Speechless*,” how do paragraphs 7 and 8 help to develop a theme? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for question 39 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 15 and 16.



GO ON

39

This question is worth 4 credits.

Learning to communicate well can be a struggle. How do the authors of “Excerpt from *Rope Burn*” and “Excerpt from *Speechless*” develop this claim about the difficulty of communication? How is this claim strengthened by details in each story? Use details from **both** stories to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- explain how the authors of both stories develop the claim about the difficulty of communication
- explain how this claim is strengthened by details in each story
- use details from **both** stories to support your response

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.